

OUR STORY TELLER.

From the Sumter Watchman.
OUR OLD TOWNSMAN.
A VILLAGE TRADITION.

BY J. WITHERSPOON SEVIN.

CHAPTER I.

It has been many long years ago—though it seems as if it were only yesterday—since I sat in my accustomed seat in the village church, where so many happy hours of my young life were spent.

Years—many years—years of weariness and of pain have flown over my head since that time. The gay, the beautiful, and the loved have gone down to the tomb. The aged has been gathered in "like a shock of corn cometh in his season;" the strong man has ceased from his labors and the hardened sleep "where the weary are at rest." The beautiful too have faded away like the flowers which year after year spring up on the same spot, and bloom and wither and die.

In looking around upon the congregation gathered in the village church, new and strange faces meet me in place of those I knew so well in by-gone years. Now and then I can trace on the features of some blooming young maiden, a shadowy resemblance to the beauties that lived a generation or two ago; but all that I loved, all that I knew—save perhaps one or two of my own generation who are now almost strangers to me—have passed away like autumn's leaves.

The old church itself, the grey tomb-stones on which, in boyhood, I loved to sit on still Sabbath mornings, and the garbled old oaks that interloped their limbs above my head in whatever direction I gazed, are the only familiar objects that meet my eye. A glance around and admonishes me that I need not seek the friends and companions of my childhood in the homes of the living. No; their names are inscribed here on the prime-looking slabs and the flag-stones around, which speak volumes to my own heart of the vanity of human life, and the nothingness of human affections. I have heard many an eloquent sermon from yonder softly cushioned pulpit, but the eloquence of the silent marble where the names of our childhood's friends are written, beggars the eloquence of man. The dead are crying aloud as if to the last man who wanders like a stranger upon the earth. The names of acquaintances and friends meet me at every turn, appealing to my heart as glad faces and bright eyes rise up in memories around me.

"SALLIE WINTER."

How familiar that name to my ears; yet hundreds have read it and passed on with a careless indifference which almost astonishes me. To me, it is a household word—aye it is something more.

I remember her as she stood before me forty years ago, and little did I then think that at sixty I should return as a stranger to my own home, and read that familiar name chiseled out upon the cold marble!

I am no sentimentalist, yet I can scarcely forbear a word of reproof to the careless stranger who treads heedlessly upon her grave.

Forty years ago she was the pride of the village and the flower of the good pastor's flock. She was "the bright particular star" of a congregation where beauty was the heritage of many. The old looked upon her with pride and admiration, the young of her own sex with good will and kindness undiminished by her personal superiority to themselves, while not a few suitors thronged about her to enjoy the sunshine of her favor and smiles.

(1) That the beautiful must perish and that the lovely must fade. What a home would this earth of ours be, if the fairy beings that smile on us here were untouched by sorrow or blight or death; if—like their affections—they knew no age or decay.

I have looked on many a brow of beauty since the heyday of youth, and many a lovely form has crossed my path since then, but my eyes never rested upon so beautiful a vision as was Sallie Winter, when I looked upon her in her twentieth summer. Just of the medium height and modeled like a Venus, with every limb full and beautifully rounded, she was the most graceful and attractive creature that ever rested upon our earth. Her features were of the purest type of classic beauty, soft, eloquent and expressive, and her rosy lips were parted in a smile, how perfect was the beauty of her pearly teeth! On her soft and dimpled shoulders descended in natural ringlets a cloud of flaxen tresses, casting a soft shadow upon her beautiful neck that seemed chiseled from parian marble, so perfect was its beauty and so pure its complexion. Her form was that of a Venus, but her gentle blue eyes shadowed by long silken lashes betrayed in their glance that retiring modesty and lovely purity of thought of which the perfect beauty of woman is itself but the symbol. Her face purely Grecian in its contour, was indeed beautiful beyond the power of language to express. I remember well, upon one arm she wore a bracelet gleaming with a coronal of bright diamonds and rubies. It must have been a costly gem, but I thought not of that then; I only remember that when its cold glitter attracted my glance, my gaze rested not upon the bauble, but upon the full beautiful arm of parian beauty tapering down to a delicate wrist that an infant might almost span.

pering down to a delicate wrist that an infant might almost span.

Sallie was no stranger to me. She did not burst upon me for the first time in the full splendor of her beauty, but she dazzled me none the less. We had been playmates from childhood—alas, alas! with what pain I write these words, since I have looked upon her tomb!—and in truth her beautiful face was one of the earliest among my recollections. We had grown up together and our early intimacy but opened the way, in maturer years, for an attachment more close and strong than that of ordinary friendship.

She was an only child, much petted and admired but good influences were silently operating to preserve her from the consequences of the overweening attachment which generally ruins the temper, and demoralizes the dispositions of only children.

Of the early history of her parents I know nothing. At the period of my earliest recollections, they were residents of our village, which to me was tantamount to their having resided there from the time of the flood, to which epoch I internally referred all things which took place before my own day. Her mother was a meek quiet and melancholy woman, who seldom smiled, and whose affections seemed centered upon her young daughter.

When a child I was frequently a visitor at their residence, which was a lonely and retired house on the outskirts of our village, large and roomy, plainly but well furnished, where all the inmates, except the beautiful young Sallie, spoke to each other in undertones. But for her, the old mansion would have been as gloomy as the churchyard, where, alas! she now lies. A maiden sun by whom I was brought up, was on terms of great intimacy with Mrs. Winter than any others of our townfolk, and it was to this cause alone that I was indebted for my frequent visits to the family. The reserve of the household, their retired habits, and the gloom that surrounded them, caused the villagers generally to keep aloof; and as the fair Sallie had but few playmates among girls of her own age, I was made doubly welcome, and soon became as much attached to her as a near relative or a brother. Even her sad and silent mother was cheered by my frequent visits, and never seemed to enjoy herself so well as when Sallie and I were playing around her. We roamed at will through the whole house, making the gloomy place to ring with the noise of our childish merriment. We two were the only glad spirits of the gloomy mansion. Her father was a strange and silent man, who with folded arms paced up and down in solitude apart from his family, generally in some chamber of the house where no one could intrude upon his privacy. But Sallie and I had learned to regard his presence as little as that of some of the antique articles of furniture that decorated the room which he most frequented. Our noise seemed never to reach his ears, and only on one or two occasions can I remember that he ever paused in his solitary promenade to notice us in our play. He always dressed plainly, and, as well as I remember, somewhat coarsely. His face was ever shaded by a white broad brimmed hat, much the worse for wear, which so concealed his features that it was seldom I obtained a glance at the hooked nose and the quiet grey eye that watched beneath its broad brim. He stooped much in his gait, and though he seemed somewhat of a feeble frame, there was a regularity and precision in his step, and a firmness in his slow, resolute tread that at once challenged observation. You felt while he was approaching you, that there was something mysterious in his air, and that as slow as his pace appeared, he was advancing upon you with a strange celerity. He was always associated in my mind with a silent mansion and the gloomy churchyard, for these were the only places where I ever met him. As regularly as the sabbath bell was tolling its last peal, his slouched hat could be seen advancing along the narrow and well worn walk that led to the door of the church. Quiet and unobtrusive, and with a certain air of meekness and yet of dignity about him, he sought the acquaintance and shunned the notice of no one. Some said that he was very poor, and that poverty and toil had broken his spirit and desecrated his sensibility. He had the sympathy and good wishes of all, yet no one intruded upon his privacy or sought to enter within the pale of that reserve which he had thrown around himself. He was an exact man in all his dealings, scrupulously honest himself and moderate in his expenditures, but his table was always supplied with every luxury. So far as mere outward show was concerned, no family in the village enjoying a moderate competency could live more plainly. The good gossip of the village at last made the discovery that he was a benevolent man, and perhaps a pious one, for in spite of his apparent poverty and unsociability, he had on various occasions, as was accidentally discovered, made liberal donations to the pastor of his church in an unostentatious manner, and designed to escape notoriety.

Only on one occasion had this taciturn and quiet man been known to forget his silent and sedate character and permit himself to be hurried away by his feelings. A blustering young man well known in the community for his frequent brawls and his indifference to the feelings of others, while passing along the street jostled rudely against him. The broad brimmed white hat was in an instant thrown back upon Winter's brow, and raising himself erect

he stood confronting the young man with his terrible grey eye fixed with wrath. Hastily snatching up a piece of timber that lay upon the side-walk, and uttering a terrible oath in a tone that made the blood of all who heard him run cold, he advanced upon his younger antagonist who retreated before him. The air of strength and vigorous energy with which the usually quiet old man seemed suddenly endowed, presented a striking contrast to the drooping gait and dejected air which habitually characterized him. He stood like an angry giant before his startled antagonist, who covered under the terrible glance of his angry eye. So greatly enraged was Winter, and so prodigious the power which he manifested in this sudden encounter, that had not a number of bystanders promptly interfered, he would have murdered the antagonist on the spot. It required all their strength to restrain him, and the most abject apologies of the young man who had awakened his wrath were scarcely sufficient to appease his resentment. At length with a cold smile of contempt he turned off and proceeded on his way as calmly as if nothing had occurred, drawing the broad brim of his beaver over his pale face and quiet and meek features, from which every trace of anger and resentment departed as suddenly as it had arisen.

Those who saw him pacing leisurely along a moment after the occurrence, with drooping shoulders and seemingly feeble step, could scarcely persuade themselves that it was the same man who had so lately stood before them with flashing eyes and erect and dilated form, whose herculean strength a number of strong men could scarcely equal. From that day men spoke of him with less of pity and more of respect, and when he appeared on the street he was treated with a consideration which caused him to smile.

Frequently this silent and gloomy man was absent for months, attending, as was said, to some mercantile establishment in which he had an interest, in some of our Southern sea-board cities. At one time Ramer spoke of it as a drug store at St. Augustine, at another as a tobacco warehouse at Mobile or New Orleans, and still again he was said to be a partner in a large establishment at Havana. No one knew with exactness the kind of business in which he was engaged, but all men spoke commiseratingly of the poverty which made it necessary for him so frequently to absent himself from home for the support of his family.

Years passed on, same winter but some were reserved in her demeanor, but there was still the same kindness and affection, differently manifested however, which had marked our early intercourse. We no longer roamed about over the lonely house but under the rustic arbor in the front yard or in the small comfortable and well furnished parlor, we enjoyed many a late a tale, to which my memory now runs back as the happiest portion of my life.

As I approached the age of manhood the more protracted became the periods of Mr. Winter's absence from his family. He was now seldom at home for a longer period than two or three months of the year, and was the same taciturn gloomy and silent man as when I first remembered him, but I imagined I could at times detect his watchful eyes directed with a glance of satisfaction towards Sallie and myself, as though he divined and fully approved of our feelings towards each other. The old gentleman seldom spoke to his daughter in my presence, but at times I could hear him conversing with her in tones so kind and gentle, and so different from the short, quick and sharp manner in which he was wont to address all others, that I internally blessed him for the affection which he lavished upon one so beautiful, and far too sensitive to live in any other than the sunny atmosphere of love and kindness.

The affection of a stern and cold tempered man is like water from a flinty rock; it is the more grateful because of the pleasant surprise which it excites. The freshness which it spreads around may not extend far, but how agreeable and striking its contrast, with the desolate waste, the barren sand, and the sterile rocks in the midst of which it sparkles, a "Diamond of the desert."

Of such a nature was the affection of the stern old man for his daughter; and Sallie loved him with an almost idolatrous devotion. She often spoke to me in praise of her father, sometimes, too, apologetically as though she feared that I, too, had imbibed some of those prejudices against him, which his mysterious manner of life and his strange reserve were so well calculated to engender in strangers; but more often she spoke in terms of deep veneration for a character, which, whatever faults or eccentricities might attach to it, ever exhibited itself as kind and affectionate—beyond all praise—to herself.

Time flew on and I reached my twenty-first year while Sallie was just in her nineteenth summer. She was the belle of our village, as beautiful as an hourglass, and won the love and esteem of all. Even those who looked with an unfriendly or suspicious eye upon her father, sought to make amends for their ungraciousness towards the parent, by an excess of kindness and partiality towards the daughter, sufficient to have turned the head of one not thoroughly proof against the allurements of flattery. Many suitors were at her feet but she turned from them all, remembering only the friendship of her childhood which had ripened into love. Her strange old sire be-

trayed unusual emotion when I approached him on the subject of my marriage with his daughter.

"Take her, Harry," answered he, with a sigh, "and may you do well! I believe you will! She has been a good angel to me and she will not fail to be devoted and true to you, and encourage you in the path of usefulness and honor. She will have an ample fortune—more than sufficient for all your wants. It has been won at a great sacrifice—greater than you can dream of. Take it and her; and, boy, be kind—be kind to her! She is well worthy of a king! I am pleased and gratified. If my life is now suddenly cut short I will have the satisfaction of knowing that Sallie has a protector worthy of her. I have watched your character from childhood and I like you well."

On the next day, Mr. Winter left his home, to be absent for some months, as was his wont, attending to the tolling business which occupied so much of his time.

I endeavored earnestly to prevail upon Sallie to appoint a day for our marriage, but she was firm in her determination to await the return of her father before taking a step in which his feelings were so much interested. It was but natural that she should desire his presence at our nuptials, and I had no other resource than to wait his return, an event which would not perhaps take place before the Christmas holidays. It was now the close of September, and I resolved to see some little of the world during the month or two of painful suspense before me.

[CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.]

MISCELLANEOUS.

Culture of the Melon.

There is no fruit that enters so largely into the daily consumption of our people as the melon, and none that seems to be so little understood or appreciated in its culture. A fine flavored water or musk melon should not be planted within one hundred yards of any other melon, or any of the melon family. Gourds, squashes or cucumbers should never be planted in the same garden or field with melons, for the volatile nature of the pollen of each will mix, making hybrids of the next generation, giving the melon a gourd, squashy flavor, and softening the shell of the gourd. The melon delights in a sandy soil, and to have them in their greatest perfection, the ground should be deeply plowed or subsoiled. The hills should be about ten feet apart. The watermelon vine is very subject to injury from water; heavy and long continued rains give the vines the appearance of having been scalded, hence the necessity of planting on hills instead of on a level. Holes should be excavated and filled with well rotted manure, with a mound made over the manure at least twelve inches higher in the centre than on the outside; on the centre of this mound, plant the seed, plant some six or eight, and when they have four leaves, thin out to three plants in a hill. As the vines begin to run, branch and bloom, pinch out the terminal bud, which will throw the whole vigor of the vine into the young fruit just set; as the fruit increases in size, take off all but one to a branch, and allow but one melon to ripen on one branch vine.

An overloaded melon vine will produce but inferior fruit. The cultivator should bear in mind that the roots of melons run just as fast and far as the vine extends, and that the practice of laying back the vines over the hills and plowing deeply between the hills, is very injurious to the crop. The melon ground cannot be broken too deep before the vines begin to run, but it is a positive injury to the vine for the plow to go three inches below the surface, over which the vine has already run. Great care should be taken in handling the vines when working among them with the hoe. For every tendril broken or bruised on the vine, the fruit is retarded in its maturity. Keep the ground clean around the vines, and as fast as the vine elongates a branch, peg it down, so that the winds may not blow them about and break them. If the striped bug is troublesome, mix one portion of guano to two of gypsum, and dust over the vine when the dew is on—the bugs will quickly depart.

The first melons that set on the vine will mature in four weeks from the time of the setting. The second settings in about three weeks. As the season advances, they will mature in less than three weeks. Fine crops of melons are made by using brush for the vines to run on, and cling to. The seed of the first melon that ripens should be saved for the next season's planting, provided it grew where no other member of the melon family could impregnate it.—Cotton Planter and Soil.

THE LOVER TO HIS BETROTHED,

The hills do kiss the sky, love,
The rippling waves the shore!
And there are lips that I, love,
May hope to kiss once more.

The skies embrace the sea, love!
The seas embrace the earth!
In this embrace, 'tween thee, love,
I hope to clasp thy worth.

The stars have wed with night, love,
With day hath wed the sun!
But I know one as bright, love,
And I would wed that one.

John B. Cough lectured in Chesham on Friday night of last week. Here is one of his anecdotes:

A long, lean, gaunt Yankee entered a drug store and asked:
"Be you the druggist?"
"Well 'pose so. I sell drugs."

"Wall hev you got any of this are scentin' stuff as the g's puts on their hankerchers?"

"Oh yea."

"Wall, our Sal's gwine to be married, and she gin me ninepence and told me to invest the hull 'mount in scentin' stuff, so's to make her stink sweet, if I could find some to suit, so if you've a mind I'll smell round."

The Yankee smelt round without being suited until the "druggist" got tired of him, and taking down a bottle of hartshorn, said:

"I've got a scentin' stuff here that'll suit you. A single drop on a handkerchief will stay for weeks, and you can't wash it out, but to get the strength of it you must take a good big smell."

"Is that so, mister? Wall, jest hold on a minute; till I get my breath, and when I show, you put it to my smell."

The hartshorn, of course, knocked the Yankee down, as liquor has done many a man. Do you suppose he got up and smelt again, as the drunkard did? Not he—but rolling up his sleeves and doubling up his fists, he said:

"You made me smell that are tussal everlastin' stuff, mister; now I'll make you smell fire and brimstone."

ADVERTISING.—Some people object to advertising; in fact they object to everything. Now our experience teaches us that unless a man advertises, his business will necessarily diminish. Who knows what lawyers are in town; what physicians; who are mechanics; what then can do, except they make themselves known through the columns of a newspaper? Gentlemen, we pray you—don't hide your lights under a bushel; this is the only way for you to become celebrated or wealthy. Verily, if Peter Snodgrass has a finer assortment and cheaper goods than Philip Splog, Peter should tell the people know it, or how in the world will they ever find it out? There are men who have articles for sale, and who frequently ask us, "do you know who wants so and so?" How do we know? We can't tell—the only way to find it out is to advertise. How in the world has Holloway, Jayne, Huntley, and hundreds of others, given circulation to their medicines? How has Stewart, Dobbie and others made fortunes? Yes, how! simply by advertising. Advertising is the business man's railroad to wealth—it brings him credit, it sells his goods, it establishes a name, it renders him the possessor of thousands.—Rising Sun.

LADIES VS GENTLEMEN.—Three things that a lady cannot do:

1. She cannot pass a millinery shop without stopping.
2. She cannot see a piece of lace without asking the price.
3. She cannot see a baby without kissing it.

A lady of our acquaintance turns the table on the gentlemen as follows:

1. He cannot go through the house and shut the door after him.
2. He cannot have a shirt made to suit him.
3. He can never be satisfied with the ladies' fashion.

DOMESTIC METEOROLOGY.—A gentleman lately took the following meteorological journal of his wife's temper; Monday, rather cloudy; in the afternoon, rainy.—Tuesday, vaporous; brightened a little towards evening. Wednesday, changeable, gloomy, inclined to rain. Thursday, high wind, and some peals of thunder. Friday, fair in the morning, variable till afternoon, cloudy all night. Saturday, a gentle breeze, hazy, a thick fog, and a few flashes of lightning. Sunday, tempestuous and rainy; toward evening somewhat calmer.

The following parody of one of Lord Byron's "Child's Harold" stanzas, is the best thing we have seen on the "vexed question," that now for some time has been the subject of successive comment:

Roll on, ye monstrous whalebone hoops—roll on! Ten thousand squibs are lanced at you in vain. Man marks the world in his restless course, But cannot touch the hoops; they laugh to scorn Jokes, punsters, clergymen, the press, and all. And when they die at last—as die they must—'Twill be because they've gone the appointed round.

The following curious sentence is said to have been taken from a volume of sermons published during the reign of James I., of England:

"This dial shows that we die all; notwithstanding, all houses are turned into ale houses, our cares into eates, our paradise into paro'dice, matrimony into matter of money and marriage into merry age, divines into dry vines; it was not so in the days of Noah—ah no?"

A young lady returning late from a concert, as it was raining, ordered the coachman to drive close to the pavement, but was still unable to step across the gutter, "I can lift you over it," said coachy. "Oh, no, I'm too heavy," said she. "Why, bless ye, marm, I'm used to liftin' barrels of sugar," replied Jehu.

TERMS:

This paper is published WEEKLY at \$2 per year, payable IN ADVANCE; \$2 50 per year, if paid within six months after subscribing, and \$3 at any time after six months.

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The Editor will take the risk of payment of the paper remitted by mail, if free of postage.

SELECTED POETRY.

THE TIDE OF DEATH.

BY HON. R. M. CHARLTON.

The tide rolls on, the tide rolls—
The waves ebbing fast,
That sweeps the pleasure from our hearts,
The loved one from our side—
That brings afflictions to our lot,
And anguish and despair,
And tears down youth's unsullied brow,
The chariot that lingers there,
The tide rolls on—wave after wave,
Its ebbing water blue—
Before it all is bright and fair,
Behind it all is woe!
That smites upon the mother's breast,
The gay and blushing bride,
Are swept away and borne along
By that relentless tide.

The tide rolls on—the soldier's eye
Grows dim beneath its swell!
The scholar shrinks the myrtle lore
That he has loved so well!
The monarch puts the crown aside,
And laborer's weary face,
Rejoice that his limbs will know
The quiet of the grave.

The tide rolls on—like summer brook
It glideth to the sea;
But like dark winter's angry tide
It rushes to the glads,
From kingly hall and lowly cot,
From battle field and hearth,
It sweeps into oblivion's sea,
The dwellers on the earth.

Roll on, thou dark and turbid wave,
Thou canst not bear away
The record of the good and brave,
That knoweth not decay.
Though fierce may rush the billows' strife,
Though deep thy current be,
Still faith shall lift her beacon high
And guide us through the sea.

THEY ARE GONE—ALL GONE.

All else how changed I for another race
Now live and die in the red man's place,
And the tall young brave with his martial tread,
And the prophet old with hoary head,
And the noble chief with his brow of care,
And the youthful maid with her raven hair,
They are gone, all gone, and are all at rest,
'Neath the mouldering sod on the valley's breast.
They are gone, all gone, from their native shore,
And the woods shall ring with their shouts no more.
From the shady grove by the river side,
Where the loves used for his dusky bride,
From the purring brook in the woody glade,
Where the young pappoose in the water played,
From the rocky hill and the sandy mound,
From the hunting field and the fishing ground,
With the frightened deer and the timid fawn,
From the forest home they are gone, all gone.
They are gone, all gone, and the rattling car
Rolls over the mound where their ashes are,
And the laborer leans on his earth worn spade,
To sigh at the havoc his work has made.
For the mouldering bones lie scattered around,
Like the dead exhumed from a burial ground,
And he stoops and takes with his horny hand,
A raven tress from the mouldering sand.
They are gone, all gone, and the crickets sing,
On their lonely graves to the sunny spring,
And the cuckoo moans in the shady wood,
O'er the desert spot where the wigwag stood,
And the Jay-bird screams from the distant hill,
To the plaintive notes of the Whippoorwill,
While the waters moan as they hurry on,
And the night wind sighs, "they are gone—all gone."

"Well, we live in a wordy age,
And 'go ahead' is all the rage;
No place but what by magic wire
Is just as nigh as though 'there nigher."